From the *MLA Handbook*, Eighth Edition:

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE YOUR USE OF MLA STYLE:

(1) Cite simple traits shared by most works, following universal guidelines:

Who is the author of the source?   (author)

What is the title of the source?   (title of the work or website page)

How was the source published?   (publisher)

Where did you find the source?   (location—the "container" you found it in)

When was the source published?   (publication date)

(2) Remember that there is often more than one correct way to document a source:

A writer whose primary purpose is to give credit for borrowed material may need to provide less information than a writer who is examining the distinguishing features of particular editions.

(3) Make your documentation useful to readers:

Good writers understand why they create citations. The reasons include demonstrating the thoroughness of the writer's research, giving credit to original sources, and ensuring that readers can find the sources consulted by the writer. Writers achieve the goals of documentation by providing sufficient information in a comprehensible, consistent structure. Learning good documentation practices is also a key component of academic integrity, assuring readers that the writer's work can be trusted. Careful documentation is sign of the writer's competence.

Citing the Core Elements

The core elements of any works cited entry are given below in the order they should be listed. Omit an element from the entry if it is not relevant to the work being documented:

1	Author.
2	Title of source.
3	Title of container (where you found it),
4	Other contributors (such as editors and translators),
5	Version (such as a volume of a scholarly journal),
6	Number (in a volume of a scholarly journal),
7	Publisher,
8	Publication date,
9	Location.

1. Author.

ONE AUTHOR:

Baron, Naomi S.

TWO AUTHORS:

Dorris, Michael, and Louise Erdrich.

THREE OR MORE AUTHORS:

Burdick, Anne, et al.

WHEN THE AUTHOR IS AN EDITOR (a collection, anthology, or when referring to an editor's contributions)

Nunberg, Geoffrey, editor.   Holland, Merline, and Rupert Hart, editors.

AUTHORS OF FILM AND TELEVISION WORKS:

As author, cite the main performer if that is the focus of your discussion:

Gellar, Sarah Michelle, performer.

Give the author's name as the screenwriter or director if that is the focus of your discussion:

Whedon, Joss, screenwriter.

CORPORATE AUTHORS:

A work may be created by an institution, an association, a government agency, or another kind of organization. When a work is published by an organization that is also its author, begin the entry with the title, skipping the author element, and list the organization as publisher.

United Nations. *Consequences of Rapid Population Growth*. U of Massachusetts, 1991.

When a work's author and publisher are separate organizations, give both names, starting with the organization that is the author. When an organization is both author and publisher, begin the entry with the title of the work, skipping the author element, and list the organization as the publisher.

Spinal Injury: Recovery and Treatment. WebMD, 2015.

When a government agency is the author, begin with the name of the government, followed by a comma and the name of the agency. List the organizational names from the largest to smallest. Substitute three hyphens for any name repeated from the author in the previous entry:

California, Department of Industrial Relations

United States, Congress, House.

---, ---, Senate. (hyphens replace US and Congress)

---, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

2. Title of source.

Give readers the full title of the work, including any subtitle. Titles that are part of a larger source (such as an article in a newspaper, magazine, or website) are placed within <u>quotation marks</u>. Titles of a stand-alone source (such as a book or film title) are given in <u>italics</u>.

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011. (a book)

Tewer, James A. "The Cultural Consequences of Early Explorations." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88.

REMEMBER:

Titles of works that stand alone are italicized:

TV show; film title; book; magazine; newspaper; website; blogsite; a CD/album; database

Titles of works that are part of a larger work go inside quotation marks:

TV episode; chapter title; magazine and newspaper articles; website page; blogsite page; a song; an article in a scholarly journal (found in a database).

3. Title of container,

A source being documented (such as an article in a magazine or on a website) may be part of a larger whole. The larger publication can be thought of as a <u>container</u> that holds the source. A container may be a journal, magazine, or newspaper; a container may be a TV series; it may be a website. These containers hold many individual titled works. The container name should be italicized:

Williams, Joy. "Rogue Territory." *The New York Times Book Review*, 9 Nov. 2014, pp. 1+.

Bazin, Patrick. "Toward Metareading." *The Future of the Book*, edited by Geoffrey Nunberg, U of California P, 1996, pp. 153-68.

Hollmichel, Stefanie. "The Reading Brain: Differences between Digital and Print." *Reader Network*, 25 Apr. 2013, Reader Network.org/differences between digital and print.

The internet makes documentation more difficult because a work may be nested with several containers; for example, an excerpt from a novel in a collection of readings that is posted in a database online. Your reader needs to know where you found your sources, so it is best to account for all the containers that enclose your source.

4. Other contributors,

In addition to an author's name, other people may be important to give credit to as a contributor. If their participation is important to your research or to identification of the work, name the other contributors. Here are some common contributors:

Edited by John K. Reeves,   Introduction by Dudley Williams,

Narrated by Phyllis Stark,   Performance by Sam Waterston,

Howells, W. D. *Great American Short Stories*. Edited by John K. Reeves, Stanford UP, 1994.

5. Version,

If the source has a notation indicating that it is a version of an earlier work or in several forms, identify the version of your source:

Newcomb, Horace, editor. "The Conquistadores." *History of the Americas*. 7th ed., Oxford UP, 2010.

6. Number,

If the source is part of a numbered series (such as a book published in several volumes), or is published in a scholarly journal, indicate which volume and number for your reader:

Wellek, Rene. *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950*. Vol. 5, Yale UP, 1986.

Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading in the Digital Age." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.

7. Publisher,

The publisher is the organization primarily responsible for producing the source or making it available to the public:

A BOOK:

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011.

[**note**: omit media type—print]

A FILM:

Kuzui, Fran Rubel, director. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Twentieth Century Fox, 1992.

A WEBSITE:

The publisher's name—often an organization—can be found in a copyright notice at the bottom of the home page or on a page that gives information about the site.

Eaves, Morris, et al., editors. *The William Blake Archive*. 1996-2014, www.blakearchive.org/blake/.

[**note**: omit media type—web; give the URL of the source and do not italicize the URL]

► Important notes about citing the publisher:

A publisher's name may be omitted for the following kinds of publications:

- a periodical (journal, magazine, newspaper—the title is enough to locate the publisher)

- a Web site whose title is essentially the same as the name of its publisher (e.g., *WebMD*)

- a Web site not involved in producing the works it makes available, such as an archive or database (e.g., *WordPress.com*; *YouTube*; *JSTOR*)

8. Publication date,

Cite the date that is most meaningful or most relevant to your use of the source. For example, if you use an article on the Web site of a news organization that also publishes its articles in print, you may find more than one date on the article. If you used the online version of the article, give only the internet date.

An example of an online version of an article:

Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist." The Atlantic, 28 Dec. 2014,
	www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist/.

A citation for the print version of the same article:

Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist." The Atlantic, Jan.-Feb. 2015, pp. 92-97.

A printed book:

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. 1952. Vintage Books, 1995.

[**note**: omit medium and city of publisher; give the original date of publication if it is important for your reader to place the work in a time period other than the year listed in your edition]

9. Location.

For print sources, a page number (p. 7) or a range of page numbers (pp. 7-28) specifies the location of borrowed text in a container such as book or periodical:

Meacham, Jon. "The Emergence of the New Right." *Time*, 18 Feb. 2014, pp. 15-18.

The location of an **online source** is commonly indicated by its URL, or Web address [lower case, no underline or color]:

Ayres, Kenneth. "Visualizing Emancipation." *American Studies*, 2013, columbia.edu/american
    studies/emancipation/.

OPTIONAL ELEMENT

Because online works typically can be changed or removed at any time, the date you accessed online material may be important; it can help your readers locate the work in the Web site's archive:

"Under the Gun." *Patriots.org*, 2014, patriots.org/underthegun/. **Accessed 23 July 2015**.

DETAILS OF MLA STYLE

★ Online MLA resource: **style.mla.org**

Authors with titles (e.g., Dr., PhD): Omit the title in the works cited list and in the text. If you want to stress the author's credentials as a source (establish "ethos"), give your readers the information in your discussion:

>   Alan Pershont, chief of medicine at John Hopkins Hospital, has worked with . . . .

Fictional characters: Refer to fictional characters in your text in the same way that the work of fiction does:

>   Abby is feared by the Puritan community; Rev. Dimmesdale is beloved.

Capitalization in titles: <u>Capitalize</u> nouns; pronouns (it, our, your, his); verbs; adjectives; adverbs; and subordinating conjunctions (after, if, that, until, when, while). <u>Do NOT capitalize</u> the following when they fall in the middle of a title: articles (the, a, an); prepositions of any length (between, against, to, as); coordinating conjunctions (for, and, but, or, so); the *to* in infinitives (How to Play Chess).

Capitalize the titles of scriptures, laws, political documents, musical compositions, conferences, and courses—but do not use italics or quotation marks with these titles.

Words for the divisions of a work: Do not capitalize, enclose in quotation marks, or italicize:

scene 7   stanza 20   chapter 2   bibliography   act 4   line 16

GUIDELINES TO USING QUOTATIONS

Quotations are most effective in research writing when used selectively; **DO NOT** <u>replace your own analysis or summarizing with quotations.</u> Quote only words, phrases, lines, and short passages that are particularly illustrative of your point, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. <u>Your project should be about your own ideas, connections, and conclusions—and quotations should merely help you explain or illustrate your point.</u>

When you use a quotation, you must construct a clear, grammatically correct sentence that introduces or incorporates a quotation with complete accuracy. <u>Remember the rule of quotation use</u>:

Introduce it (establish the source)

Use it (quote your source)

Comment on it (state your point; connect the idea; analyze the statement)

- <u>Incorporate quotations of no more than four lines</u>:

    "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," wrote Charles Dickens of the eighteenth century.

- <u>Set off quotations of more than four lines in a block indented half an inch</u> (one TAB) from the left margin. Do not further indent the first line of the text.

    At the conclusion of Lord of the Flies, Ralph realizes the horror of his actions:

    > For a moment he had a fleeting picture of the strange glamour that had once invested the beaches. But the island was scorched up like dead wood—Simon was dead—and Jack had. . . . The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. (197)

- If a new paragraph begins *within* the text block, indent the first line of the new paragraph:

    At the conclusion of Lord of the Flies, Ralph realizes the horror of his actions:

    > For a moment he had a fleeting picture of the strange glamour that had once invested the beaches. But the island was scorched up like dead wood—Simon was dead—and Jack had. . . . The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body.

> The officer, surrounded by these noises, was moved and a little embarrassed.
> He turned away to give him time to pull himself together; and waited, allowing his
> eyes to rest on the trim cruiser in the distance. (197)

- If you quote one to three lines of verse, put in quotation marks within your text, just as you would lines of prose. Use a forward slash with a space on each side (/) to indicate to your reader where the line breaks fall; indicate stanza breaks with two forward slashes (//):

> *The Tao te ching* says that the ancient masters were "so deep beyond knowing / we can only describe their appearance: // perfectly cautious, as if crossing / winter streams" (64).

- When quoted material is incorporated into your text, parenthetical documentation becomes part of your sentence, so the ending punctuation follows the parentheses. In contrast, a block quotation is set off from your text, so place the ending punctuation and then add the parenthetical note. (See the two examples above.)

- Use an **ellipsis** to indicate a portion of a quote that you have omitted (BUT be fair to the author's intentions and make sure your passage is grammatically correct):

> The hunt is legal. All the park's indigenous inhabitants . . . have the right to harvest plants and animals for their own use (36).

- <u>Do NOT use an ellipsis at the beginning of a quote</u>; place quotation marks where quoted words begin:

> Historian William L. Rivers notes that "presidential control reached its zenith under Andrew Jackson" (71) and that Jackson knew how to work the press to his advantage.

- <u>Use an ellipsis at the end of a sentence when quoted material is omitted</u>. Note the fourth period with the ellipsis, indicating the end of your sentence, but place this final period after a parenthetical reference you may need:

Regarding plagues in the Middle Ages, Tuchman writes, "Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stressed air as the communicator of disease. . . ."

Regarding plagues in the Middle Ages, Tuchman writes, "Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stressed air as the communicator of disease . . ." (101-03).

- Use square brackets to enclose any comments or explanations inside a quotation:

He claimed he could provide "hundreds of examples [of court decisions] to illustrate the historical tension between church and state" (28).

- Use double quotation marks around quotations incorporated into your text. Single quotation marks are used ONLY when a quotation contains another quotation:

Historians note that "Lincoln strove to 'hold the national family together' in the face of Northern and Southern tensions" (37).

- If a quotation ends with both single and double quotation marks, the comma or period goes inside both quotation marks:
Historians note that with the increasing conflict between North and South, "Lincoln strove to 'hold the national family together.'"

GUIDELINES TO USING NUMBERS / NUMERALS

In discussions that require few numbers, spell out numbers written in one or two words (one, thirty-six, four hundred, two thousand). However, if your discussion calls for frequent use of numbers, use numerals for all numbers that come before a unit of measurement (30 inches; 5 kilograms). Large numbers may be expressed in a combination of numerals and words (4.5 million).

Use numerals with abbreviations and symbols (6 lbs.; 4:00 p.m.; $3.50; 45%; $4.5 million) and for items in numbered series (year 3; chapter 9; volume 2). Spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence, or re-word the sentence to begin differently.

To underline express a range of numbers: Give the second number in full for numbers up to ninety-nine. For larger numbers, give only the last two digits of the second number:

21-48   10-12   96-101   103-04   2000-03   1898-1901

GUIDELINES TO USING ABBREVIATIONS

Use neither periods or spaces between letters for abbreviations using capitalized letters, except for names of people:

BC   US   DVD   PhD   J. R. R. Tolkien   U (university)   UP (university press)

Most abbreviations in lowercase letters are followed by periods:

ed.   p.   pp.   ch.   vol.   a.m.   e.g. (for example)   i.e. (that is)

Months that are longer than four letters are abbreviated in the works-cited list:

Jan.   Feb.   Mar.   Apr.   May   June   July   Aug.   Sep.   Oct.   Nov.   Dec.

GUIDELINES TO USING URLs and DOIs

When giving a URL, copy it in full from your Web browser, but omit http:// or https://. Articles in journals are often assigned DOIs, or digital object identifiers. A DOI will continue to lead to an article online even if the URL changes. When possible, cite a DOI (preceded by doi:) instead of a URL.

Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 10, no. 3, May

      2000. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/pmc.2000.0021.

The above citation broken down:

Author. "Title of Work." *Title of publication* ("container" 1), vol. no., date. *Website name* ("container"

      2), DOI.

GUIDELINES TO INDENTING CITATIONS

Format the works-cited list with a hanging indention, so that the second line is indented half and inch from the left margin. This formatting helps your reader to quickly spot the beginning of each new entry, as it "hangs" at the left margin. However, this formatting is difficult in certain digital contexts. In this case, leaving an extra line between entries will serve the same purpose.

GUIDELINES TO CITATIONS IN NON-PRINT REPORTS

Throughout its history, the MLA Handbook has focused on the production of scholarship in traditional, printed form. Before the eighth edition, the title declared that the handbook was for "writers of research papers." Today, academic work can take many forms other than the research paper. Scholars produce presentations, videos, blogs, and Web projects. Where these projects borrow or discuss the work of other authors, however, they should still include information about their sources.

The standards for source documentation in nonprint forms are certain to change as media evolves, but the purposes will remain the same: providing the information that enables a reader or viewer to track your sources and giving credit to those whose work influenced yours.

Slide-based presentations:

Include brief citations on each slide and add a works-cited list on a slide at the end.

Video-based presentations:

Overlay text at the bottom of the screen to provide viewers with brief information about borrowed sources and include full documentation in your closing credits.

Web-based projects:

Include a live link from your in-text documentation to the online material cited. Add a works-cited list as an appendix to the project.

Core Elements Template

The core elements of any works cited entry are given below in the order they should be listed. Omit an element from the entry if it is not relevant to the work being documented.

► Use this template to record information about each of your sources as you conduct your research. You can use the information to build your works cited list:

1	**Author**.	
2	**Title of source**.	
3	**Title of container** (where you found it),	
4	**Other contributors** (such as editors and translators),	
5	**Version** (such as a volume of a scholarly journal),	
6	**Number** (in a volume of a scholarly journal),	
7	**Publisher**,	
8	**Publication date**,	
9	**Location**.	